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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 000263

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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER GEDI PROMISES A "NEW SOMALIA," ACTS
NEGATIVELY

Classified By: Somalia Counselor John Yates for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a January 7 meeting in Nairobi with Assistant Secretary Frazer, Somali Prime Minister Ali Gedi was confident a "new Somalia" was on its way, and appealed for immediate donor support. The rosy picture Gedi painted did not mask the very serious problems which remain within the leadership itself. These major rifts surfaced shortly after the meeting when Gedi reneged on his commitment to A/S Frazer to meet with the Parliament Speaker. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) When A/S Frazer was unable to travel to Mogadishu, a confident Prime Minister Gedi, accompanied by the Foreign Minister and other aides, described for her six days of consultations with elders, business leaders and civil society members to establish government institutions on a broadly representative basis. Assistant Secretary Frazer emphasized to Gedi the need for the PM to lead an inclusive process that inspires Somali and international confidence in the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). Informing the PM of the Secretary's commitment of USD 40 million in new assistance, A/S Frazer explained that this assistance was dependent on progress in the areas of security, stability and inclusive political dialogue.

"A Different Mogadishu"

¶3. (C) The Prime Minister described a positive situation in the country, in particular Mogadishu. The trend is clear, Gedi stated, the Somali people have confidence in the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In just 10 to 15 days you will see a different Mogadishu, he remarked. All sub-clans are consulting, the central prison is operational, the courts are open and law enforcement is "taking off," Gedi stated.

¶4. (C) On the key issue of security, Gedi denied that the TFG had declared martial law as reported in the media and by Parliament Speaker Shariff Hassan Sheikh Adan. Rather, he said that the Cabinet was merely trying to send a message to the former warlord militias or freelance militias that extra-legal activities would not be tolerated. Gedi said that he had established an inclusive committee for "Security and Stabilization," explaining that it is comprised of all stakeholders. Detailing the "voluntary" disarmament process,

the PM explained that warlords, already largely disarmed by the Council of Islamic Courts (CIC), were under pressure to hand over their remaining weapons, but admitted that the TFG was conducting the disarmament process in Mogadishu with the support of Ethiopian troops. We are handling the process carefully, he continued, if people feel safe, they will surrender their arms. A/S Frazer noted the concern that some clans might perceive the call for disarmament as a threat or as targeting a specific clan, and suggested that the TFG consult with other leaders in the region, particularly Djibouti and Yemen, for valuable input and advice on how the process should be run. Gedi repeatedly emphasized the need for building the capacity of Somalia's own security forces. The 1,000 police that are currently trained have been summoned to Mogadishu to staff its 13 police stations.

15. (C) A/S Frazer noted that the recent statements by the TFG leadership had improved and indicated a greater willingness to engage in an inclusive process of dialogue, but emphasized that the TFG's actions must match these words.

Frazer highlighted the recent problematic statements by TFG Interior Minister Hussein Aidede (that there are 3 to 4 thousand CIC militia in Mogadishu), emphasizing that the TFG must not be seen as allowing former warlords to return to Mogadishu. Gedi denied suggestions that warlords might be allowed to return to Mogadishu. On roadblocks, the PM conceded that a few might have gone up after the CIC's initial removal, but they were quickly dismantled. The PM's aides described driving unhindered and unescorted throughout the capital. Human rights, democracy and free expression are respected now, the PM added. Gedi also gave a positive report on the status of the ports and airport. Revenue is being collected and immigration services are operational. A/S Frazer reminded the PM that in appointing officials to

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run Somalia's institutions, such as the ports, it was of critical importance that the positions be distributed transparently and evenly.

16. (C) A/S Frazer also emphasized the need for reconciliation among the leadership of the TFIs, particularly between the President, Prime Minister, and Parliament Speaker, which the International Contact Group on Somalia had discussed earlier in the week. Gedi dismissed rumors that there was a plan afoot to impeach Speaker Shariff Hassan. Parliament is doing its job, operating in Baidoa. It's only the Speaker and "less than 20" MPs that are missing; but, Gedi added, he has called Speaker Shariff Hassan to join the Parliament in Baidoa. Asserting that he is reaching out, the PM blamed "irresponsible members" of the international community for the (mis)perception that there is dysfunction among the TFIs' leadership. The international community is creating doubts, he stated, with allegations that some MPs were aligned with the CIC.

But Help is Needed

17. (C) A lack of support (resources) is his government's greatest challenge, Gedi remarked. The PM appealed for technical assistance, including the placement of foreign technical experts with the TFIs, to build government capacity. Gedi also emphasized a need for humanitarian relief supplies to provide basic services especially in that IDPs were returning to Mogadishu in numbers. In addition, the country needs training and equipment for security forces.

With respect to U.S. support, Gedi suggested making our assistance more apparent, so Somalis understand the U.S. is helping. A/S Frazer suggested that the TFG reach out to the Somali diaspora, encouraging them to come home and support the reconstruction process.

18. (C) Reluctant to agree that Ethiopian troops should leave right away, Foreign Minister Hurre suggested that once Somalia and Ethiopia see that there is a viable international

force, "our friends can go." Appreciative of the police training provided by Kenya and others so far, the PM asked that donors provide more resources for the police. Gedi suggested that within four months Somali security forces would be self sufficient, with the right assistance. Concerned about the flow of security equipment, Hurre asked A/S Frazer to revisit UNSC 1725 and specifically to alter the UN arms embargo to allow the TFG to import weapons. The Assistant Secretary said that the Security Council would take a fresh look at 1725 when appropriate, but that in the meantime the TFG should not publicly request a lifting of the arms embargo. This would be unhelpful, she continued, considering the common perception that the country is already awash in arms.

¶9. (C) Responding to A/S Frazer's suggestion that reconciliation within the leadership of the TFIs is of utmost importance, Gedi claimed he had been reaching out to the Speaker, and committed both to participating in a roundtable discussion with Mogadishu civil society leaders and Speaker Shariff Hassan. When the time came, however, he was a no-show, sending members of this staff with lame excuses for reneging. TFG Foreign Minister Hurre later told the Ambassador that President Yusuf had prevented Gedi from meeting with the Speaker, claiming that the Speaker had been implicated in the September 2006 plot to assassinate President Yusuf.

Comment

¶10. (C) Gedi's behavior highlights doubts that the TFG leadership will be able to lead a process of inclusive political dialogue with key stakeholders currently outside of the TFIs. END COMMENT.

¶11. (U) Assistant Secretary Frazer has cleared this message.
RANNEBERGER